- Transaction Processing
- Card Specifications
- Card Issuance and PIN Selection
- Training
- Acquirer Participation
- Customer Service
- Settlement and Reconciliation
- Reporting
- Program Integrity
- System Security
- Independent Audit and Certification
- System Availability and Backup
- Year 2000 Compliance

6.2   Central Processing Unit (CPU) and Automated Response Unit (ARU)

The EBT system, including ARU and Customer Service Center (CSC), must have the capacity to store authorization information and process transactions for recipient caseloads and authorized retailers throughout the life of the Contract. The system must accommodate future system enhancements, new technology, and third party processors, Federal, State, and county interfaces.

The transaction processing platform is defined to include all processing components provided by the Contractor that are required for the successful end-to-end acquiring, switching, processing, and settlement of EBT transactions, and are within the Contractor's reasonable span of control or influence. The specific components that may be included depends upon a Contractor's proposed solution and systems architecture. The Contractor is responsible for the availability, capacity, and performance of all system components within its reasonable control. This might include, but is not limited to,

- A central account database and transaction processor,
- Transaction gateway component,
- An acquiring switch component,
- Transaction settlement component,
- Call center / help desk component,
- Contractor provided communications equipment (routers, protocol converters, communications boxes, etc.),
- Contractor provided communications networks, and
- Back up processors and processing components

This definition specifically does not include components provided by third parties in support of arms length private sector contractual relationship for the provision of commercial and EBT transaction services to the extent such services are competitively available from multiple vendors and are not under the reasonable control or influence of the EBT contractor. Such relationship might include that between a retailer and a third party POS transaction acquirer or a commercial

ATM network and its member ATM owning institutions. These types of relationships are outside the reasonable control of the Contractor.

Meets Requirement: Yes _____   No _____

Reference Document: _____Page(s) _____

Description: _____

6.2.1   Central Processing Unit (CPU)

The Bidder's Proposal must describe, in detail, the CPU to be used to operate the system. This description should include specific information regarding the primary mainframe, related hardware, and all system components, as well as the proposed backup equipment. The Proposal must identify the prime and backup equipment locations (including hot-site, if any). The State reserves the right to inspect these locations upon Contract award.

Meets Requirement: Yes _____   No _____

Reference Document: _____Page(s) _____

Description: _____

6.2.2   Automated Response Unit (ARU)

The Bidder must describe in detail the primary and backup ARUs to be utilized for this system and disclose the physical locations of each. The State reserves the right to inspect these locations upon Contract award. For the ARU (for recipients and

retailers), assuming statewide rollout for the current caseloads, the Proposal also should include data on

- Number of lines available/concurrent call capacity
- Average/maximum response times for automated transactions
- Maximum number of menu options
- Average and maximum "wait" times for customer service attendants
- The average length of call by type
- The percentage of dropped calls
- Busy signal tracking
- Other relevant performance characteristics

The Bidder shall describe how it will track and report on calls experiencing a busy signal when incoming calls exceed the capacity of the system.

Meets Requirement: Yes _____   No _____

Reference Document: _____ Page(s) _____

Description: _____

6.3   Interface Requirements

6.3.1   County Interfaces

California eligibility systems are maintained and operated at the county level. The State is in the process of migrating the current (legacy) eligibility systems to consortium systems, collectively known as Statewide Automated Welfare System (SAWS). SAWS systems will be maintained and operated by the county consortia. This migration is in various stages for the four consortia in the state. Section 3, Current Environment, describes current eligibility systems and migration schedules.

The Contractor shall provide the telecommunications infrastructure and system interfaces necessary to accommodate the various eligibility systems that currently exist within the state. As counties migrate to their SAWS system, the Contractor shall support the transition to new county eligibility system interfaces for those counties.

Eligibility interface specifications are a part of the overall EBT design specifications as required in the ITP. The specifications must be completed early in the Design Phase in order to allow counties/consortia time to modify software to support the interface and test their interface work. The State has developed preliminary eligibility system interface specifications. (See Appendix J *EBT Eligibility System Interface Specifications*). This document describes the interface options that can be used to transfer information between the county eligibility systems and the Contractor's EBT system. Specifications are provided for batch interface files and for a host to host interface. The State believes that these interface options, in addition to information transfer afforded by the EBT Contractor's administrative terminal system, represent the most viable options for data transfer. During the system design phase, the Contractor will be

required to modify/update the interface specifications to accommodate the final system design and the Contractor's EBT system.

The Contractor shall develop a standard interface, which will be used by all counties/consortia eligibility systems as the interface between their respective systems and the EBT system. The interface document will define the technical interface, record and/or message formats, data elements, communications protocols, operations procedures, error handling, programming notes and any other information deemed necessary to allow a county to build, install and operate the interface. The Contractor shall develop the interface in accordance with the final version of the interface specifications. This will allow each county to select those interface options deemed most appropriate to that county's needs, while requiring the Contractor to develop the interfaces for the EBT System only once. Each county, in conjunction with its eligibility system vendor, will be responsible for developing the eligibility system interface in accordance with the final specifications. As counties prepare for conversion of their cases, each county will certify its interface, as implemented within the respective eligibility system, to the Contractor's EBT System.

The eligibility system interface will consist of three major components.

- **Standard Batch Eligibility Interface** (required by all counties) – this will be a host-to-host batch interface in which various records, wrapped in a batch header and footer, are transmitted from the eligibility system processor to the EBT system at a minimum of daily and possibly more often. Each record will direct the EBT system to perform certain functions as described in the ITP, such as set up an EBT account, and will provide the necessary data to perform the function. Batch files for each county's batch processing will constitute independent files. These files will be transmitted as available.
- **Standard Host-to-Host Eligibility Interface** – This interface is designed to provide online real time access between local office staff and the EBT system. However, under this implementation, the Contractor will create a real time transaction based link between its system and a county or consortia host system. The county or consortium host system will be responsible for reformatting and forwarding all transaction requests received from the local office to the Contractor system and for receiving replies from the EBT system and returning them to the requesting local office terminal. The primary advantage of this implementation is to leverage existing networks and equipment and to avoid the need for duplicate data entry.
- **Administrative Terminal Interface** – This interface will provide real time on-line access to the EBT system from county office locations and terminals. This interface will effectively be a direct link between the local office terminal within the respective county and the EBT system.

A single county location may choose to use both the host–to-host and the administrative terminal interfaces concurrently. Table 6-1 indicates the preliminary interface options selected for the legacy eligibility systems. Table 6-2 indicates the preliminary interface options selected for the existing or planned SAWS eligibility systems.

Table 6-1: Legacy Eligibility Systems Interface Selections

Legacy System	Interface Selections
WCDS Consortium	• Administrative Terminal • Batch
Riverside County	• Administrative Terminal • Batch
Stanislaus County	• Administrative Terminal • Batch
Ventura County	• Administrative Terminal • Batch

Table 6-2: SAWS Eligibility Systems Interface Selections

SAWS System	Interface Selections
ISAWS	• Host-to-Host • Administrative Terminal • Batch
LEADER	• Host-to-Host • Administrative Terminal • Batch
CalWIN	• Host-to-Host ▪ Administrative Terminal ▪ Batch
C-IV	• Host-to-Host • Administrative Terminal • Batch

While there is a single, standard interface specification, the specifications will contain some optional functions, which a specific county may or may not choose to implement. Card issuance via mail or over-the-counter is one example.

The Contractor shall provide a test bed (test plan, data, scripts, test processing platform, communications links, staffing) through out the life of the project, to allow individual county/consortium systems to test and certify their interface implementations and to support testing of any changes to county systems as needed. The State shall have responsibility for scheduling the test system with the counties. The Contractor shall provide technical assistance (respond to questions) as necessary to support county/consortium development and testing.